

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for annotating a document comprising:

a processor;

memory coupled to said processor, said memory comprising at least one text document;

a document processing engine configured to obtain said at least one text document from said memory and convert at least a portion of said at least one text document to at least one audio file;

an audio output device configured to play said at least one audio file to a first user;

an audio input device configured to obtain at least one verbalized ~~comment~~ annotation from said user about said at least one audio file while said at least one audio file is playing, wherein said at least one verbalized ~~comment~~ annotation is stored as an audio comment file apart from said at least one audio file;

an annotator, said annotator configured to associate said audio comment file with a location in said text document that corresponds to said audio file playing when said first user provided said at least one ~~comment~~ annotation.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said memory comprises removable media.
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2 where said removable media comprises flash memory.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said audio file comprises a streaming media file.
5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said annotator obtains a start annotation mark from said first user indicating a beginning of said location.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said annotator obtains an annotation end mark identifying the end of said location.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for annotating a document

comprising:

a server having a text-to-speech engine configured to obtain at least one text document from memory and convert at least a portion of said at least one text document to at least one audio file;

a thin-client device configured to obtain said at least one audio file from said server;

an audio output device configured to play said at least one audio file to a first user, wherein said audio output device is associated with said thin-client;

said thin-client device having an audio input element configured to obtain at least one verbalized ~~comment~~ annotation from said user about said at least one audio file while said at least one audio file is playing, wherein said at least one verbalized ~~comment~~ annotation is transmitted to said server and stored as an audio comment file on said server;

said server having an annotator, said annotator configured to associate said audio comment file with a location in said text document that corresponds to said audio file playing when said first user provided said at least one ~~comment~~ annotation.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said thin-client device is connected to said server via an interconnection fabric.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said interconnection fabric comprises a telephone network.
10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said interconnection fabric comprises a computer network.
11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said thin-client device comprises a telephone.
12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said audio comment file is stored in at least one associations file.
13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said annotator is associated with a Speech Recognition Engine configured to obtain said audio comment file and convert said verbalized comment back to text.
14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said server comprises a voice command interface.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said server is configured to mark the beginning of said verbalized comment upon receipt of a start annotation mark.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said server is configured to mark the end of said verbalized comment upon receipt of an end annotation mark.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein said audio comment file comprises data recorded by said server between receipt of said start annotation mark and said end annotation mark.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for annotating a document comprising:
- obtaining a pre-existing document from a memory medium via an interconnection path configured to access said document;
 - converting said document to audio elements;
 - presenting an audible playback of said audio elements to a user when said user indicates a desire to hear said document;
 - obtaining verbalized comments comprising annotations to said document during said audible playback, said verbalized comments obtained from said user via an audio input mechanism upon receipt of an annotation start mark during said audible playback;
 - associating said verbalized comments with a location in said document corresponding with the occurrence of said annotation start mark during said audible playback.
19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein said document comprises text data.
20. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein said memory medium comprises removable media.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein said removable media comprises flash memory.
22. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein said interconnection path comprises a network.
23. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein said network comprises a wireless network.
24. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein said network comprises a telephone network.
25. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein said telephone network comprises a cellular network.
26. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein a document processing engine performs said converting step.
27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein said document processing engine optimizes said audio elements.

28. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein said converting said document to audio elements occurs at a server.
29. (Original) The method of claim 28 wherein said server generates an audio file associated with said presenting said audible playback of said audio elements.
30. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein said converting said document to audio elements occurs at a client.
31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said client generates an audio file associated with said presenting said audible playback of audio elements.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for annotating a document comprising:

- obtaining a document from a memory medium via an interconnection path configured to access said document, said document having text elements;
- obtaining from an annotations file a first annotation of said document, said first annotation having a first set of audio elements;
- converting said text elements to a second set of audio elements;
- associating said first set of audio elements with said second set of audio elements to generate a playback document;
- generating an audible playback of said playback document to a user when said user indicates a desire to hear said document;
- obtaining verbalized comments comprising a second annotation of said document during said audible playback, said verbalized comments obtained from said user via an audio input mechanism upon activation of an annotation trigger during said audible playback;
- associating said verbalized comments with a location in said playback document corresponding with the occurrence of said annotation trigger during said audible playback.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein said document comprises text data.

34. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein said memory medium comprises removable media.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34 wherein said removable media comprises flash memory.

36. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein said interconnection path comprises a network.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36 wherein said network comprises a wireless network.

38. (Original) The method of claim 36 wherein said network comprises a telephone network.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38 wherein said telephone network comprises a cellular network.

40. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein a document processing engine performs said converting step.

41. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein said document processing engine optimizes said audio elements.

42. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein said converting said document to audio elements occurs at a server.

43. (Original) The method of claim 42 wherein said server generates an audio file associated with said presenting said audible playback of said audio elements.

44. (Original) The method of claim 32 wherein said converting said document to audio elements occurs at a client.

45. (Original) The method of claim 44 wherein said client generates an audio file associated with said presenting said audible playback of audio elements.

46. (Currently Amended) A method for annotating a document comprising:
- generating authentication information of a user desiring access to a pre-existing document;
 - allocating an associations file structure for said user;
 - obtaining said document from a memory medium via an interconnection path configured to access said document, said document having text elements;
 - obtaining a first pre-existing annotation of said document, said first pre-existing annotation having a first set of audio elements;
 - converting said text elements to a second set of audio elements;
 - associating said first set of audio elements with said second set of audio elements to generate a playback document;
 - generating an audible playback of said playback document to said user when said user indicates a desire to hear said document;
 - obtaining verbalized comments from said user via an audio input mechanism upon activation of an annotation trigger during said audible playback, said verbalized comments comprising a second annotation of said document;
 - associating said verbalized comments with a location in said playback document corresponding with the ~~occurrence~~ activation of said annotation trigger during said audible playback; and

storing said location and said authentication information of said user and said verbalized comments in said associations file structure.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said document comprises text data.

48. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said memory medium comprises removable media.

49. (Original) The method of claim 48 wherein said removable media comprises flash memory.

50. (Original) The method of claim 48 wherein said interconnection path comprises a network.

51. (Original) The method of claim 50 wherein said network comprises a wireless network.

52. (Original) The method of claim 50 wherein said network comprises a telephone network.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52 wherein said telephone network comprises a cellular network.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46 wherein a document processing engine converts said text elements to said second set of audio elements.

55. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said document processing engine optimizes said audio elements.

56. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said converting said document to audio elements occurs at a server.

57. (Original) The method of claim 56 wherein said server generates an audio file associated with said presenting said audible playback of said audio elements.

58. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein said converting said document to audio elements occurs at a client.

59. (Original) The method of claim 58 wherein said client generates an audio file associated with said presenting said audible playback of audio elements.